

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A content distribution system which comprises a portable terminal, a distribution server capable of communicating with said portable terminal, and a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and in which a content item is distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal by use of said client terminal, wherein

2. A content distribution system according to claim 1, wherein



address of said portable terminal to which the URL of the download page is to be transmitted by means of an electronic mail.

5. A content distribution system according to claim 1, wherein

said content request means of said client terminal comprises portable-terminal-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data for specifying said portable terminal; and

said content distribution means of said distribution server comprises direct distribution means for distributing the content item directly to said portable terminal specified by the data transmitted by said portable-terminal-specifying-data transmission means.

6. A content distribution system according to claim 5, wherein the data transmitted by said portable-terminal-specifying-data transmission means of said client terminal include a mail address of said portable terminal; and said direct distribution means of said distribution server transmits an electronic mail directed to the mail address of said portable terminal, while attaching said content item to the electronic mail.

7. A content distribution system according to

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claim 1, wherein

said client terminal comprises type-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal; and

said content distribution means of said distribution server distributes to said portable terminal a content item corresponding to the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

8. A content distribution system according to claim 7, wherein

said distribution server comprises a database which stores a content item; and

said content distribution means of said server processes the content item stored in said database in accordance with the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal and distributes the processed content item to said portable terminal as the requested content item.

9. A content distribution system according to claim 7, wherein

said distribution server comprises a database which stores a plurality of content items corresponding to types of said content execution means of said portable terminal; and

said content distribution means of said

distribution server selects one content item from the plurality of content items stored in said database in accordance with the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal and distributes the selected content item to said portable terminal.

10. A content distribution system which comprises a portable terminal, a client terminal capable of communicating with said portable terminal, and a distribution server capable of communicating with said client terminal and in which a content item is distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal by use of said client terminal, wherein

said distribution server comprises:

content distribution means for distributing the content item to said client terminal in response to a request from said client terminal;

said client terminal comprises:

content request means for requesting said distribution server to distribute the content item; and

content transmission means for transmitting to said portable terminal the content item distributed from said distribution server; and

said portable terminal comprises:

content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the content item transmitted from said client terminal.

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11. A content distribution system according to claim 10, wherein

said distribution server comprises:

trial-content distribution means for distributing, in response to a request from said client terminal, a trial content item to said client terminal, the trial content item being used at said client terminal in trial use of the content item to be distributed from said client terminal to said portable terminal; and

said client terminal comprises:

trial-content request means for requesting said distribution server to distribute the trial content item; and

trial means for using the distributed trial content item on a trial basis.

12 A content distribution system which comprises a portable terminal, a distribution server capable of communicating with said portable terminal, and a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and in which a content item is distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal by use of said client terminal, wherein

said distribution server comprises:

a database which stores a plurality of content items;

search means for performing search under search conditions provided from said client terminal in order to select from the stored content items a content item or items which match the search conditions and for transmitting content-specifying data which specify the selected content item or items to said client terminal as search results; and

content distribution means for distributing to said portable terminal a content item corresponding to content-specifying data transmitted from said client terminal or said portable terminal;

said client terminal comprises:

search condition transmission means for transmitting the search conditions to said distribution server; and

display means for displaying the search results transmitted from said distribution server;

said portable terminal comprises:

content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the content item distributed from said distribution server; and

said client terminal or said portable terminal comprises:

content-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting the content-specifying data to said distribution server.

13. A content distribution system according to claim 12, wherein





specifying-data transmission means and the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

15. A content distribution system according to claim 14, wherein said content distribution means of said distribution server processes a content item stored in said database and corresponding to the content-specifying data transmitted from said content-specifying data transmission means, in accordance with the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal and transmits the processed content item to the portable terminal.

16. A content distribution system according to claim 14, wherein

said distribution server comprises a database which stores a plurality of content items corresponding to types of said content execution means of said portable terminal; and

said content distribution means of said server selects from the plurality of content items stored in said database one content item corresponding to the content-specifying data, in accordance with the data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal, and distributes the selected content item to said portable terminal.

17. A content distribution system according to

claim 2, wherein a different trial content item is distributed depending on the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

18. A content distribution system according to claim 2, wherein

said distribution server comprises charging means for charging a predetermined fee to a user of said client terminal or to a user of said portable terminal when the content item is distributed, and charging a fee lower than the predetermined fee to the user when the trial content item is distributed.

19. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server is distributed to a portable terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the content item, by use of a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server, wherein

distribution of the content item is requested to said distribution server by said client terminal; and

in response to the request from said client terminal, the content item is distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal.

20. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server is

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distributed to a portable terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the content item, by use of a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including trial means for performing operation on the basis of a trial content item corresponding to the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal, wherein

distribution of the trial content item is requested to said distribution server by said client terminal;

in response to the request from said client terminal, the trial content item is distributed from said distribution server to said client terminal;

distribution of the content item is requested to said distribution server by said client terminal; and

in response to the request from said client terminal, the content item is distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal.

21. A content distribution method according to claim 19, wherein

the distribution of the content item from said distribution server to said portable terminal is achieved by:

causing said distribution server to mail an electronic mail to said portable terminal to thereby transmit a URL of a download page for downloading the

content item from said distribution server to said portable terminal; and

causing said portable terminal to access the URL in order to download the content item to said portable terminal.

22. A content distribution method according to claim 21, wherein a mail address of said portable terminal to which the URL of the download page is to be transmitted by means of an electronic mail is transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server.

23. A content distribution method according to claim 19, wherein

data for specifying said portable terminal are transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server; and

the content item is distributed from said distribution server directly to said portable terminal specified by the data for specifying said portable terminal.

24. A content distribution method according to claim 23, wherein the data for specifying said portable terminal include a mail address of said portable terminal; and said content item is transmitted from said distribution server as a document attached to an electronic mail directed to the mail address of said

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portable terminal.

25. A content distribution method according to claim 19, wherein

data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal are transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server; and

in response to a request from said client terminal, a content item corresponding to the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal is distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal.

26. A content distribution method according to claim 25, wherein the content item corresponding to the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal is produced by said distribution server by processing a content item stored in a database of said distribution server in accordance with the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

27. A content distribution method according to claim 25, wherein a plurality of content items corresponding to types of said content execution means of said portable terminal are stored in a data base of said distribution server; and the content item corresponding to the data which specify the type of

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said content execution means of said portable terminal is obtained by selecting one content item from the stored content items in accordance with the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

28. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server is distributed to a portable terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the content item, by use of a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server, wherein

distribution of the content item is requested to said distribution server by said client terminal;

in response to the request from said client terminal, the content item is distributed from said distribution server to said client terminal; and

the content item distributed to said client terminal is transmitted from said client terminal to said portable terminal.

29. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server is distributed to a portable terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the content item, by use of a

client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including trial means for performing operation on the basis of a trial content item corresponding to the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal, wherein

distribution of the trial content item is requested to said distribution server by said client terminal;

in response to the request from said client terminal, the trial content item is distributed from said distribution server to said client terminal;

distribution of the content item is requested to said distribution server by said client terminal;

in response to the request from said client terminal, the content item is distributed from said distribution server to said client terminal; and

the content item distributed to said client terminal is transmitted from said client terminal to said portable terminal.

30. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server having a database storing a plurality of content items is distributed to a portable terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed content item, by use of a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including display

means, wherein

search conditions for content search are transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server;

search is performed at said distribution server in accordance with the search conditions in order to select from the stored content items a content item or items which match the search conditions, and content-specifying data which specify the selected content item or items are transmitted to said client terminal as search results;

the search results are displayed on said display means of said client terminal;

distribution of a content item is requested from said client terminal or said portable terminal to said distribution server on the basis of the content-specifying data; and

in response to the request, the content item corresponding to the content-specifying data is transmitted from said distribution server to said portable terminal.

31. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server having a database storing a plurality of content items is distributed to a portable terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the content item, by use of a

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client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including display means and trial means for performing operation on the basis of a trial content item corresponding to the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal, wherein

search conditions for content search are transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server;

search is performed at said distribution server in accordance with the search conditions in order to select from the stored content items a content item or items which match the search conditions, and content-specifying data which specify the selected content item or items are transmitted to said client terminal as search results;

the search results are displayed on said display means of said client terminal;

distribution of the trial content item is requested from said client terminal to said distribution server on the basis of the content-specifying data;

in response to the request for the trial content item, the trial content item corresponding to the content-specifying data is transmitted from said distribution server to said client terminal;

the trial content item is used on a trial basis by said trial means of said client terminal;

distribution of the content item is requested from said client terminal or said portable terminal to

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said distribution server on the basis of the content-specifying data; and

in response to the request for the content item, the content item corresponding to the content-specifying data is transmitted from said distribution server to said portable terminal.

32. A content distribution method according to claim 31, wherein

data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal are transmitted from said client terminal or said portable terminal to said distribution server; and

a content item corresponding to the content-specifying data and the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal is distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal.

33. A content distribution method according to claim 32, wherein the content item corresponding to the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal is produced by said distribution server which processes a content item stored in a database of said distribution server and corresponding to the content-specifying data in accordance with the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

34. A content distribution method according to claim 32, wherein a plurality of content items corresponding to types of said content execution means of said portable terminal are stored in a data base of said distribution server; and the content item corresponding to the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal is obtained by selecting one content item from the stored content items in accordance with the content-specifying data and the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

35. A content distribution method according to claim 20, wherein a different trial content item is distributed depending on the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

36. A content distribution method according to claim 20, wherein

a predetermined fee is charged to a user of said client terminal or to a user of said portable terminal when the content item is distributed; and a fee lower than the predetermined fee is charged to the user when the trial content item is distributed.

37. A distribution server capable of communicating with a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of a distributed content item and with a client

terminal, comprising:

content distribution means for distributing the content item to said portable terminal in response to a request from said client terminal.

38. A distribution server capable of communicating with a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of a distributed content item and with a client terminal including trial means for performing operation on the basis of a trial content item corresponding to the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal, comprising:

content distribution means for distributing the content item to said portable terminal in response to a request from said client terminal; and

trial-content distribution means for distributing the trial content item to said client terminal in response to a request from said client terminal.

39. A distribution server according to claim 37, wherein said content distribution means comprises:

URL mailing means for sending an electronic mail to said portable terminal in order to transmit to said portable terminal the URL of a download page for downloading the content item; and

download means for transmitting the content item to said portable terminal in response to access to the URL by said portable terminal.

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40. A distribution server according to claim 39, wherein said URL mailing means transmits the electronic mail to a mail address of said portable terminal transmitted from said client terminal.

41. A distribution server according to claim 37, wherein said content distribution comprises direct distribution means for distributing the content item directly to said portable terminal specified by the data transmitted by said client terminal.

42. A distribution server according to claim 41, wherein the data transmitted from said client terminal include a mail address of said portable terminal; and said direct distribution means of said distribution server transmits an electronic mail directed to the mail address of said portable terminal, while attaching said content item to the electronic mail.

43. A distribution server according to claim 37, wherein in response to a request from said client terminal, said content distribution means distributes to said portable terminal a content item corresponding to the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

44. A distribution server according to claim 43, further comprising a database which stores a content

item, wherein said content distribution means processes the content item stored in said database in accordance with the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal and distributes the processed content item to said portable terminal.

45. A distribution server according to claim 43, further comprising a database which stores a plurality of content items corresponding to types of said content execution means of said portable terminal, wherein said content distribution means selects one content item from the plurality of content items stored in said database in accordance with the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal and distributes the selected content item to said portable terminal.

46. A distribution server which can communicate with a client terminal capable of communicating with a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of a distributed content item and which distributes the content item to said portable terminal via said client terminal, comprising:

content distribution means for distributing the content item to said client terminal in response to a request from said client terminal.

47. A distribution server which can communicate with a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of a distributed content item and a client terminal including trial means for performing operation on the basis of a trial content item corresponding to the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal and which distributes the content item to said portable terminal via said client terminal, comprising:

content distribution means for distributing the content item to said client terminal in response to a request from said client terminal; and

trial-content distribution means for distributing the trial content item to said client terminal in response to a request from said client terminal.

48. A distribution server which can communicate with a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of a distributed content item and a client terminal including display means for displaying search results, comprising:

a database which stores a plurality of content items;

search means for performing search under search conditions provided from said client terminal in order to select from the stored content items a content item or items which match the search conditions and for transmitting content-specifying data which specify the





client terminal or said portable terminal and containing the content-specifying data; and

trial-content distribution means for distributing to said client terminal a trial content item corresponding to the content-specifying data, in response to a distribution request signal transmitted from said client terminal and containing the content-specifying data.

50. A distribution server according to claim 48, wherein said content distribution means distributes to said portable terminal a content item corresponding to said content-specifying data and in accordance with the data transmitted from said client terminal or said portable terminal and specifying the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

51. A distribution server according to claim 50, wherein said content distribution means processes a content item stored in said database and corresponding to said content-specifying data in accordance with the data which specify the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal, and transmits the processed content item to said portable terminal.

52. A distribution server according to claim 50, wherein  
said database stores a plurality of content items

corresponding to types of said content execution means of said portable terminal; and

said content distribution means selects from the plurality of content items stored in said database one content item corresponding to the content-specifying data, in accordance with the data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal, and distributes the selected content item to said portable terminal.

53. A distribution server according to claim 38, wherein said trial-content distribution means distributes a different trial content item to said client terminal in accordance with the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

54. A distribution server according to claim 38, further comprising charging means for charging a predetermined fee to a user of said client terminal or to a user of said portable terminal when the content item is distributed, and for charging a fee lower than the predetermined fee to the user when the trial content item is distributed.

55. A client terminal capable of communicating with a distribution server which distributes a content item to a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed content item, comprising:

content request means for requesting said distribution server to distribute the content item to said portable terminal.

56. A client terminal according to claim 55, further comprising:

trial-content request means for requesting said distribution server to distribute a trial content item which is used at said client terminal for trial use of the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal; and

trial means for using on a trial basis the trial content item transmitted from said distribution server.

57. A client terminal according to claim 55, wherein said content request means comprises portable-terminal-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data for specifying said portable terminal to which said content item is to be distributed.

58. A client terminal according to claim 57, wherein the data transmitted by said portable-terminal-specifying data transmission means contains a mail address of said portable terminal.

59. A client terminal according to claim 55, further comprising type-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data

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which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

60. A client terminal capable of communicating with a distribution server which distributes a content item to a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed content item, comprising:

content request means for requesting said distribution server to distribute the content item; and

content transmission means for transmitting to said portable terminal the content item distributed from said distribution server.

61. A client terminal according to claim 60, further comprising:

trial-content request means for requesting said distribution server to distribute a trial content item which is used at said client terminal for trial use of the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal; and

trial means for using on a trial basis the trial content item transmitted on the basis of the request for distribution of the trial content item.

62. A client terminal capable of communicating with a distribution server which distributes a content item to a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the

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distributed content item and which includes a database for storing a plurality of content items, comprising:

search condition transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server search conditions used for content search; and

display means for receiving from said distribution server content-specifying data which specify a content item or items selected thorough searching performed by said distribution server and matching the searching conditions and for displaying the content-specifying data as search results.

63. A client terminal according to claim 62, further comprising:

trial-content request means for requesting said distribution server to distribute a trial content item which is used at said client terminal for trial use of the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal; and

trial means for using on a trial basis the trial content item transmitted from said distribution server.

64. A client terminal according to claim 62, further comprising type-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data for specifying a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

65. A portable terminal to which a content item

is distributed from a distribution server by use of a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server, comprising:

content receiving means for receiving the content item which is transmitted from said distribution server in response to a request from said client terminal; and

content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the received content item.

66. A portable terminal according to claim 65, wherein said content receiving means comprises:

URL receiving means for receiving an electronic mail transmitted from said distribution server and containing a URL of a download page for downloading the content item; and

content obtaining means for accessing the URL in order to download the content item.

67. A portable terminal according to claim 65, wherein said content receiving means receives the content item as a document attached to an electronic mail directed to the mail address of said portable terminal transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server.

68. A portable terminal to which one of a plurality of content items stored in a distribution server is distributed by use of a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server,

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comprising:

content-specifying-data transmission means for transmitted to said distribution server content-specifying data for specifying a content item among content items selected through searching performed on the basis of search conditions transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server; and

content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the content item which is distributed from said distribution server in accordance with the content-specifying data.

69. A portable terminal according to claim 68, further comprising type-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data which specify a type of said content execution means.

70. A computer-readable recording medium on which is recorded a program applied to a client computer capable of communicating with a distribution server which distributes a content item to a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed content item, said program comprising:

content request processing for requesting said distribution server to distribute the content item to said portable terminal.

71. A computer-readable recording medium

according to claim 70, wherein said program further comprises:

trial-content request processing for requesting said distribution server to distribute a trial content item which is used at said client terminal for trial use of the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal; and

trial processing for using on a trial basis the trial content item transmitted from said distribution server.

72. A computer-readable recording medium according to claim 70, wherein

said content request processing comprises portable-terminal-specifying-data transmission processing for transmitting to said distribution server data for specifying said portable terminal.

73. A computer-readable recording medium according to claim 72, wherein the data for specifying said portable terminal contain a mail address of said portable terminal which receives distribution of the content item.

74. A computer-readable recording medium according to claim 70, wherein said program further comprises type-specifying-data transmission processing for transmitting to said distribution server data which specify a type of said content execution means of said

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portable terminal.

75. A computer-readable recording medium on which is recorded a program applied to a client computer capable of communicating with a distribution server which distributes a content item to a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed content item, said program comprising:

content request processing for requesting said distribution server to distribute the content item; and

content transmission processing for transmitting to said portable terminal the content item distributed from said distribution server in response to the request.

76. A computer-readable recording medium according to claim 75, wherein said program further comprises:

trial-content request processing for requesting said distribution server to distribute a trial content item which is used at said client terminal for trial use of the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal; and

trial processing for using on a trial basis the trial content item transmitted on the basis of the request for distribution of the trial content item.

77. A computer-readable recording medium on

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which is recorded a program applied to a client computer which can communicate with a distribution server which has a database for storing a plurality of content items and distributes a content item to a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed content item, said program comprising:

search condition transmission processing for transmitting to said distribution server search conditions used for content search; and

display processing for receiving from said distribution server content-specifying data which specify a content item or items selected thorough searching performed by said distribution server and matching the searching conditions and for displaying the content-specifying data as search results.

78. A computer-readable recording medium according to claim 77, wherein said program further comprises:

trial-content request processing for requesting said distribution server to distribute a trial content item which is used at said client terminal for trial use of the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal; and

trial processing for using on a trial basis the trial content item transmitted from said distribution server.

79. A computer-readable recording medium according to claim 77, wherein said program further comprises type-specifying-data transmission processing for transmitting to said distribution server data for specifying a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

80. A content distribution system which comprises a portable terminal, a distribution server capable of communicating with said portable terminal, and a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and in which a content item is distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal by use of said client terminal, wherein

said distribution server comprises:

a database for storing a plurality of content items;

content storage means for storing said content items in said database together with registration dates each indicating a date on which the corresponding content item has been stored in said database, in such a manner that the registration dates are related to said content items;

search means for performing search under search conditions provided from said client terminal in order to select from the content items stored in said database content items which match the search conditions, sorting data representing the selected

content items in descending order of registration dates to thereby produce a list, and transmitting the thus-produced list to said client terminal as search results; and

content distribution means for distributing to said portable terminal a content item corresponding to content-representing-data transmitted from said client terminal or said portable terminal;

said client terminal comprises:

search condition transmission means for transmitting the search conditions to said distribution server; and

display means for displaying the search results transmitted from said distribution server;

said portable terminal comprises:

content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the content item distributed from said distribution server; and

said client terminal or said portable terminal  
comprises:

data transmission means for transmitting the content-representing data to said distribution server.

81. A content distribution system which comprises a portable terminal, a distribution server capable of communicating with said portable terminal, and a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and in which a content item is distributed from said distribution server to said

portable terminal by use of said client terminal,  
wherein

said distribution server comprises:

a database for storing a plurality of regular  
content items and trial content items corresponding to  
the regular content items;

content storage means for storing said regular  
content items and trial content items in said database  
together with trial-content registration dates each  
indicating a date on which the corresponding trial  
content item has been stored in said database;

search means for performing search under  
search conditions provided from said client terminal in  
order to select from the regular content items stored  
in said database regular content items which match the  
search conditions, sorting data representing the  
selected regular content items in descending order of  
registration dates of the trial content items  
corresponding to the selected regular content items, to  
thereby produce a list, and transmitting the thus-  
produced list to said client terminal as search  
results;

trial content distribution means for  
distributing a trial content item to said client  
terminal in response to a trial-content distribution  
request from said client terminal, the trial content  
item corresponding to content-representing data  
transmitted from said client terminal together with the  
distribution request;

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regular content distribution means for distributing a regular content item to said portable terminal in response to a regular-content distribution request from said client terminal or said portable terminal, the regular content item corresponding to content-representing data transmitted from said client terminal or said portable terminal together with the distribution request;

said client terminal comprises:

search condition transmission means for transmitting the search conditions to said distribution server;

display means for displaying the search results transmitted from said distribution server; and

trial-content request means for transmitting the content-representing data and the trial-content distribution request; and

trial means for using on a trial basis the trial content item transmitting from said distribution server;

said portable terminal comprises:

content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the regular content item distributed from said distribution server; and

said client terminal or said portable terminal comprises:

regular-content request means for transmitting to said distribution server the content-representing data and the regular-content distribution request.

82. A content distribution system according to claim 81, wherein said distribution server comprises content conversion means for converting the regular content items to the trial content items.

83. A content distribution system according to claim 82, wherein

said client terminal or said portable terminal comprises type-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal; and

said regular content distribution means of said distribution server distributes to said portable terminal the regular content item corresponding to the content-representing data and the data which specify the type of the content execution means of the portable terminal.

84. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server having a database storing a plurality of content items is distributed to a portable terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed content item, by use of a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including display

means, wherein

said content items are stored in said database together with content-item registration dates each indicating a date on which the corresponding content item has been stored in said database;

search conditions are transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server;

content items which match the search conditions are selected by said distribution server from said database and data representing the selected content items are sorted in descending order of registration dates to thereby produce a list;

the thus-produced list is transmitted from said distribution server to said client terminal as search results;

the search results are displayed on said display means of said client terminal;

distribution of a content item is requested from said client terminal or said portable terminal to said distribution server on the basis of content-representing data; and

in response to the request, the content item corresponding to the content-representing data are distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal.

85. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server having a database for storing content items and trial content



items is distributed to a portable terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed content item, by use of a client terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and including display means and trial content execution means for using a distributed trial content item on a trial basis, wherein

regular content items and trial content items corresponding to the regular content items are stored in said database together with trial-content registration dates each indicating a date on which the corresponding trial content item has been stored in said database;

search conditions are transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server;

content items which match the search conditions are selected by said distribution server from said database and data representing the selected content items are sorted in descending order of registration dates of the trial content items corresponding to the selected regular content items to thereby produce a list;

the thus-produced list is transmitted from said distribution server to said client terminal as search results;

the search results are displayed on said display means of said client terminal;

distribution of a trial content item is requested from said client terminal or said portable terminal to said distribution server on the basis of content-representing data;

in response to the request for distribution of the trial content item, the trial content item corresponding to the content-representing data are distributed from said distribution server to said client terminal;

distribution of a content item is requested from said client terminal or said portable terminal to said distribution server on the basis of content-representing data; and

in response to the request for distribution of the content item, the content item corresponding to the content-representing data are distributed from said distribution server to said portable terminal.

86. A content distribution method according to claim 85, wherein the regular content items are converted to produce the trial content items.

87. A content distribution method according to claim 86, wherein

the data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal are transmitted from said client terminal or said portable terminal to said distribution server; and

a content item corresponding to the data which



content distribution means for distributing to said portable terminal a content item corresponding to content-representing-data transmitted from said client terminal or said portable terminal.

89. A distribution server which can communicate with a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of a distributed content item and a client terminal including display means for displaying search results and trial means for performing operation on the basis of a trial content item corresponding to the content item to be distributed to said portable terminal, comprising:

a database for storing a plurality of regular content items and trial content items corresponding to the regular content items;

content storage means for storing said regular content items and trial content items in said database together with trial-content registration dates each indicating a date on which the corresponding trial content item has been stored in said database;

search means for performing search under search conditions provided from said client terminal in order to select from the regular content items stored in said database regular content items which match the search conditions, sorting data representing the selected regular content items in descending order of registration dates of the trial content items

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corresponding to the selected regular content items, to thereby produce a list, and transmitting the thus-produced list to said client terminal as search results;

trial content distribution means for distributing a trial content item to said client terminal in response to a trial-content distribution request from said client terminal, the trial content item corresponding to content-representing data transmitted from said client terminal together with the distribution request; and

regular content distribution means for distributing a regular content item to said portable terminal in response to a regular-content distribution request from said client terminal or said portable terminal, the regular content item corresponding to content-representing data transmitted from said client terminal or said portable terminal together with the distribution request.

90. A distribution server according to claim 89, further comprising content conversion means for converting the regular content items to the trial content items.

91. A client terminal capable of communicating with a distribution server which includes a database for storing a plurality of content items and which distributes a content item to a portable terminal

including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed content item, comprising:

search condition transmission means for transmitting the search conditions to said distribution server; and

display means for displaying, as search results, the list transmitted from said distribution server, the list including content-representing data representing the content items selected from said database on the basis of the search condition and sorted in descending order of their registration dates.

92. A client terminal capable of communicating with a distribution server which includes a database for storing content items and trial content items together with registration dates of the trial content items and which distributes a regular content item to a portable terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of the distributed regular content item, comprising:

search condition transmission means for transmitting the search conditions to said distribution server;

display means for displaying, as search results, the list transmitted from said distribution server, the list including content-representing data representing the content items selected from said database on the basis of the search conditions and sorted in descending

order of registration dates of the trial content items;

trial-content request means for transmitting the content-representing data and requesting distribution of the trial content item; and

trial means for using on a trial basis the trial content item transmitted from said distribution server.

93. A client terminal according to claim 92, further comprising type-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

94. A content distribution system which comprises a client terminal, and a distribution server capable of communicating with said client terminal and in which a content item is distributed from said distribution server to said client terminal, wherein said distribution server comprises:

a database for storing a content item; content processing means for processing the content item stored in the database in accordance with data transmitted from said client terminal and representing an environment of content execution means of said client terminal; and

content distribution means for distributing the processed content item to said client terminal in response to a distribution request from said client terminal; and

said client terminal comprises:

content execution means for executing the  
content item transmitted from said distribution server;

distribution request means for requesting said distribution server for distribution of the content item; and

environment data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server the data representing the environment of the content execution means.

95. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server having a database storing a plurality of content items is distributed to a client terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of a distributed content item, wherein

distribution of a content item is requested from  
said client terminal to said distribution server;

data representing an environment of said content  
execution means are transmitted from said client  
terminal to said distribution server;

the content item stored in said database is processed by said distribution server in accordance with the data representing the environment of the content execution means; and

the processed content item is distributed to said client terminal in response to a distribution request from said client terminal.



96. A distribution server which can communicate with a client terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of a distributed content item, comprising:

a database for storing a content item;

content processing means for processing the content item stored in the database in accordance with data transmitted from said client terminal and representing an environment of content execution means; and

content distribution means for distributing the processed content item to said client terminal in response to a distribution request from said client terminal.

97. A client terminal capable of communicating with a distribution server which includes a database for storing a plurality of content items and processing means for processing the content items in accordance with predetermined data, comprising:

distribution request means for requesting said distribution server for distribution of the content item;

content execution means for executing the content item distributed from said distribution server;

environment data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data representing the environment of the content execution

means and serving as the predetermined data.

98. A computer-readable recording medium on which is recorded a program applied to a distribution server which can communicate with a client terminal including content execution means for performing operation on the basis of a distributed content item and which has a database for storing contents, said program comprising:

content processing processing for processing the content item stored in said database in accordance with data transmitted from said client terminal to said distribution server and representing an environment of content execution means; and

content distribution processing for distributing the processed content item to said client terminal in response to a distribution request from said client terminal.

99. A content distribution system which comprises a first terminal, a distribution server capable of communicating with said first terminal, and a second terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server and in which a content item is distributed from said distribution server to said second terminal, wherein

said distribution server comprises:

a database for storing a content item;  
content processing means for processing the content

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item stored in said database in accordance with data transmitted from said first terminal and representing an environment of content execution means of said second terminal; and

content distribution means for distributing the processed content item to said second terminal in response to a distribution request from said first or second terminal; and

said first terminal comprises:

environment data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server the data representing the environment of said content execution means of said second terminal;

said second terminal comprises:

content execution means for executing the content distributed from said distribution server; and

said first or second terminal comprises:

distribution request means for requesting to said distribution server for distribution of the content item.

100. A content distribution method in which a content item stored in a distribution server having a database and capable of communicating with a first terminal is distributed to a second terminal capable of communicating with said distribution server, by use of said first terminal, wherein

distribution of a content item is requested from said first terminal to said distribution server;

data representing an environment of content execution means of said second terminal are transmitted from said first terminal to said distribution server;

the content item stored in said database is processed by said distribution server in accordance with the data representing the environment of the content execution means; and

the processed content item is distributed to said second terminal in response to a distribution request from said first terminal or said second terminal.

101. A distribution server which can communicate with a first terminal and a second terminal including content execution means for performing a content item, comprising:

a database for storing a content item;  
content processing means for processing the content item stored in said database in accordance with data transmitted from said first terminal and representing an environment of said content execution means of said second terminal; and

content distribution means for distributing the processed content item to said second terminal in response to a distribution request from said first or second terminal.

102. A content distribution system according to claim 11, wherein a different trial content item is distributed depending on the type of said content

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execution means of said portable terminal.

103. A content distribution system according to claim 13, wherein a different trial content item is distributed depending on the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

104. A content distribution system according to claim 11, wherein

said distribution server comprises charging means for charging a predetermined fee to a user of said client terminal or to a user of said portable terminal when the content item is distributed, and charging a fee lower than the predetermined fee to the user when the trial content item is distributed.

105. A content distribution system according to claim 13, wherein

said distribution server comprises charging means for charging a predetermined fee to a user of said client terminal or to a user of said portable terminal when the content item is distributed, and charging a fee lower than the predetermined fee to the user when the trial content item is distributed.

106. A content distribution method according to claim 29, wherein a different trial content item is distributed depending on the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

107. A content distribution method according to claim 31, wherein a different trial content item is distributed depending on the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

108. A content distribution method according to claim 29, wherein

a predetermined fee is charged to a user of said client terminal or to a user of said portable terminal when the content item is distributed; and a fee lower than the predetermined fee is charged to the user when the trial content item is distributed.

109. A content distribution method according to claims 31, wherein

a predetermined fee is charged to a user of said client terminal or to a user of said portable terminal when the content item is distributed; and a fee lower than the predetermined fee is charged to the user when the trial content item is distributed.

110. A distribution server according to claim 47, wherein said trial-content distribution means distributes a different trial content item to said client terminal in accordance with the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

111. A distribution server according to claim 49,

wherein said trial-content distribution means distributes a different trial content item to said client terminal in accordance with the type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

112. A distribution server according to claim 47, further comprising charging means for charging a predetermined fee to a user of said client terminal or to a user of said portable terminal when the content item is distributed, and for charging a fee lower than the predetermined fee to the user when the trial content item is distributed.

113. A distribution server according to claim 49, further comprising charging means for charging a predetermined fee to a user of said client terminal or to a user of said portable terminal when the content item is distributed, and for charging a fee lower than the predetermined fee to the user when the trial content item is distributed.

114. A client terminal according to claim 63, further comprising type-specifying-data transmission means for transmitting to said distribution server data for specifying a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

115. A computer-readable recording medium according to claims 71, wherein said program further

comprises type-specifying-data transmission processing for transmitting to said distribution server data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

116. A computer-readable recording medium according to claim 72, wherein said program further comprises type-specifying-data transmission processing for transmitting to said distribution server data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

117. A computer-readable recording medium according to claim 73, wherein said program further comprises type-specifying-data transmission processing for transmitting to said distribution server data which specify a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.

118. A computer-readable recording medium according to claim 78, wherein said program further comprises type-specifying-data transmission processing for transmitting to said distribution server data for specifying a type of said content execution means of said portable terminal.